

CLAIMS SUMMARY

1-7 Cancelled

8. (New) A rapid coupling comprising
a sleeve having an inner stop and an insertion end;
a pipe nipple having an insertion end adapted to be inserted into the sleeve's
insertion end and having an outer surface formed with an engagement section;
a locking element provided in the sleeve at the insertion end of the sleeve, the
locking element, upon engagement with the engagement section, retaining the
nipple in the sleeve to constitute a coupled state of the coupling;
a compression spring disposed between the inner stop of the sleeve and the
insertion end of the nipple; and in an uncoupled state of the coupling, the
compression spring pushes the nipple out of the sleeve to such an extent that the
engagement section is outside the sleeve.

9. (New) The rapid coupling of claim 8, wherein the engagement section
of the nipple is formed as a groove, and a recess is provided in the sleeve, the
recess having successive regions with diameters decreasing in an axial direction
toward the insertion end of the sleeve, the diameter of an inner one of the regions
being at least equal to the outer diameter of the nipple plus twice the radial thickness
of the locking element, and the diameter of a center region corresponding to the
diameter of the groove plus twice the radial thickness of the locking element.

10. (New) The rapid coupling of claim 9, wherein the diameter of an outer
one of the regions of the recess is larger than the outer diameter of the nipple to
leave a gap between the nipple and the sleeve for an unlocking tool to be inserted.

11. (New) The rapid coupling of claim 9, wherein the locking element is a resilient retaining ring having an inner diameter which, in a relieved state of the retaining ring, is smaller than the outer diameter of the nipple.

12. (New) The rapid coupling of claim 8, wherein the engagement section of the nipple is formed as a projection, and a recess having two successive regions is provided in the sleeve, the diameter of the outer one of the regions adjoining said insertion end of the corresponding to the outer diameter of the projection, and the diameter of the inner one of the regions being at least equal to the outer diameter of the projection plus twice the radial thickness of the locking element.

13. (New) The rapid coupling of claim 12, wherein the locking element is a resilient retaining ring having an inner diameter which, in a relieved state of the retaining ring, is smaller than the outer diameter of the projection of the nipple.